

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 NSA-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06

SAJ-01 ACDA-05 IO-10 /076 W
----- 103083

R 241645Z SEP 75

FM USMISSION USBERLIN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1470

AMEMBASSY BONN

INFO AMEMBASSY BERLIN UNN

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY PARIS

NATO BRUSSELS 6636

C O N F I D E N T I A L USBERLIN 1954

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGSC PGOV, PFOR, WB, GE, UR

SUBJECT: LOCAL REACTION TO SOVIET PROTEST ON MEETING OF LAENDER
INTERIOR MINISTERS

REF: USBERLIN 1947

SUMMARY: IN PREDICTABLE REACTION TO ADN RELEASE, BERLIN
GOVERNMENTAL AND POLITICAL LEADERS HAVE FIRMLY AND UNANIMOUSLY
REJECTED SOVIET PROTEST STATEMENT ON SEPTEMBER 19 MEETING
OF LAENDER INTERIOR MINISTERS IN BERLIN. DESPITE THIS
UNACCUSTOMED PUBLICITY, WE CONTINUE TO BELIEVE THAT NO
FORMAL RESPONSE TO STATEMENT IS NECESSARY AND THAT SOVIETS
PROBABLY DO NOT EXPECT ONE. END SUMMARY

2. UNUSUAL SOVIET STEP OF IMMEDIATELY PUBLICIZING
SEPTEMBER 22 STATEMENT TO ALLIED MISSIONS ON BERLIN MEETING
OF LAENDER INTERIOR MINISTERS HAS QUITE PREDICTABLY PROVOKED
SWIFT AND SHARP REACTION ON PART OF BERLIN GOVERNMENTAL
AND POLITICAL CIRCLES. IN REJECTING PROTEST SENAT SPOKES-
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MAN MADE GENERAL ASSERTION, AS ON SEPTEMBER 20 (PARA 5,

REFTEL), THAT MEETINGS OF LAENDER MINISTERS IN BERLIN WERE IN CONFORMITY BOTH WITH QA AND LEGAL STATUS OF CITY. SUCH MEETINGS COULD DISCUSS ANY QUESTIONS WITH EXCEPTION OF THOSE RELATING TO STATUS AND EXTERNAL SECURITY OF CITY. SPD HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES FRAKTION-LEADER HAUS CHIMED IN WITH SUPPORT FOR SENAT POSITION, DEFENDING INTERIOR MINISTERS' BERLIN MEETINGS AS LONG-STANDING PRACTICE AND CALLING UPON SOVIETS TO CEASE RAISING "MISGUIDED" COMPLAINTS. FDP BUNDESTAG DEPUTY HOPPE, SPEAKING FOR JUNIOR COALITION PARTNER, CHARACTERIZED SOVIET PROTEST AS "SHRILL ACCOMPANIMENT" TO GENSCHER-GROMYKO MEETINGS IN NEW YORK.

3. SHARPEST REACTION, PERHAPS NOT UNEXPECTEDLY, CAME FROM BERLIN CDU. HOUSE FRAKTION LEADER LUMMER DECLARED THAT SEPTEMBER 22 STATEMENT WAS PROFF THAT, EVEN AFTER HELSINKI SUMMIT, SOVIET UNION HAD NOT ABANDONED GOAL OF SEPARATING BERLIN FROM LEGAL, ECONOMIC AND MONETARY SYSTEMS OF FRG AND WAS METHODICALLY UNDERMINING QA TO THIS END. LUMMER CALLED UPON WESTERN ALLIES "VIGOROUSLY" TO REJECT SOVIET PROTEST AS REPRESENTING FALSE INTERPRETATION OF QA AND TO UNDERSCORE IN SO DOING LEGITIMATE EXISTING TIES BETWEEN BERLIN AND BUND.

4. LOCAL EDITORIAL COMMENT ON SOVIET STATEMENT WAS LIMITED TO KEMNA PIECE IN DIE WELT, ENTITLED "THE KREMLIN CHOOSES TO TAKE THE OFFENSIVE", WHICH ARGUED THAT SOVIETS FELT SELVES AT MOMENT UNDER PRESSURE FROM BONN TO AGREE TO INCLUSION OF BERLIN IN PENDING FRG-SOVIET AGREEMENTS AND SOUGHT TO EXPLOIT POLITICALLY HARMLESS AND LEGITIMATE MEETING BY WAY OF COUNTERACTION. KEMNA POINTED OUT THAT THIS WAS FIRST INSTANCE SINCE CONCLUSION OF QA THAT SOVIETS HAD IMMEDIATELY MADE PUBLIC AN OFFICIAL COMMUNICATION TO ALLIED MISSIONS AND, REFERRING TO PRAVADA CRITICISM OF RECENT VISIT TO BERLIN OF SOUTH AFRICAN FOREIGN MINISTER, HE RAISED POSSIBILITY THAT THIS STEP WAS INTENDED AS SIGNAL FOR FRESH PROPAGANDISTIC BARRAGE AGAINST BERLIN.

5. BOTH TAGESSPIEGEL AND BERLINER MORGENPOST CARRIED ON FRONT PAGE SEPTEMBER 24 WASHINGTON-DATELINED DPA REPORT TO EFFECT THAT "COMPETENT GOVERNMENTAL CIRCLES" WERE TREATING SOVIET CONFIDENTIAL

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PROTEST IN "COOL ROUTINE MANNER". AS IN ALL PREVIOUS CASES, REPORT CONTINUED, U.S. AUTHORITIES VIEWED SOVIET EMBASSY'S REPRESENTATIONS AS BEING WITHOUT FOUNDATION.

6. FRENCH (CHAIRMAN) INFORMATION OFFICER HAS RECEIVED SEVERAL INQUIRIES FROM PRESS CONCERNING SOVIET PROTEST. HE HAS SIMPLY CONFIRMED, WITHOUT FURTHER COMMENT, THAT PROTEST WAS INDEED DELIVERED.

7. COMMENT: IT IS SLIGHTLY IRONIC THAT PROTEST STATEMENT
THAT SOVIETS APPARENTLY VIEW AS NO MORE THAN PRO FORMA
SHOULD HAVE PROVOKED SO SHARP A REACTION IN BERLIN AND SHOULD

EVEN BE REGARDED AS SIGNAL FOR NEW SOVIET OFFENSIVE
AGAINST CITY. DESPITE PUBLICITY, HOWEVER, WE CONTINUE TO
BELIEVE THAT NO FORMAL RESPONSE IS NECESSARY. SIMILAR
PROTEST ONE YEAR AGO WENT UNANSWERED; SOVIETS LEFT NO
AIDE MEMOIRE ON SEPTEMBER 22, INDICATING PERHAPS THAT THEY
DID NOT EXPECT RESPONSE; AND FRENCH (CHAIRMAN) POLAD
INTIMATED AT TIME THAT NO FURTHER ANSWER WOULD BE FORTH-
COMING. IF QUESTIONED BY SOVIETS ON THIS SCORE, ALLIED
MISSIONS COULD SIMPLY STATE THAT PROTEST WAS ANSWERED
ON THE SPOT AND THAT NO FURTHER REPLY WAS DEEMED NECESSARY.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: MINISTERIAL MEETINGS, GOVERNMENT REACTIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 24 SEP 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: GolinoFR
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975USBERL01954
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750331-1031
From: USBERLIN
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750920/aaaaarhm.tel
Line Count: 133
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 75 USBERLIN 1947
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: GolinoFR
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 22 APR 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <22 APR 2003 by BoyleJA>; APPROVED <23 APR 2003 by GolinoFR>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
06 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: LOCAL REACTION TO SOVIET PROTEST ON MEETING OF LAENDER INTERIOR MINISTERS
TAGS: PGOV, PFOR, WB, GC, UR
To: STATE BONN
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006